Corps "TeleEngineering" Contributes to the War Fight

When U.S. Army Rangers seized the Haditha Dam and hydropower complex on the Euphrates River on April 1 to prevent its possible destruction by Iraqi forces, a potential non-traditional weapon of "mass destruction" had been eliminated from the Iraqi arsenal.

The U.S. Central Command decision to employ the rangers to seize the dam was based in large measure on information and briefings from the Army Engineer Research and Development Center's (ERDC) TeleEngineering Operations Center in Vicksburg, Miss.

The possible destruction of this critical hydropower facility, located about 125 miles northwest of Karbala, Iraq, posed potential catastrophic effects throughout the country. In addition to its impact on the war fight, the resulting flooding as an immediate aftermath and and lack of water supply during the summer months would have added to the hardships being experienced by the Iraqi people.

Shortly after the dam was captured, an Army Corps of Engineers team - one officer and two NCOs - arrived to ensure its security and the power plant's continued operation. The team is in daily, real-time video contact with USACE technical experts in Mobile, Ala., communicating hydraulic, mechanical and electrical information, to include photos, through ERDC's TeleEngineering System.

TeleEngineering enables tactical military engineers on the battlefield who might not have the experience to evaluate dams to reach back to Corps experts who routinely work dam issues for the Civil Works program. This means a small engineer footprint in the theater of war can virtually bring the expertise of the entire Army Corps of Engineers to the battlefield.

ERDC's TeleEngineering Operations Center has performed dam breach analysis and flood inundation mapping for nearly 40 dams; assessed the military significance of over 120 river structures; assessed hydraulic conditions at over 20 river crossings and bridging sites; and provided flood prediction and analysis for over 15 areas of concern thus far during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Users include the U.S Central Command, U.S. Third Army, 4th Infantry Division, Naval Construction Force, and numerous intelligence organizations.